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AUTHOR Short, Paul Myrick; Rinehart, James S.
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ABSTRACT

A model for fostering educational administration students' reflective thinking skills is presented in this paper. Based on a cognitive psychological framework, the reflection model is applied to a doctoral program in educational administration. Methodology involved analysis of 10 doctoral students' journals, which were year-long records of critical events requiring reflective decision making, to determine the influence of reflection on students' decision making skills. The higher level of language used by students in the spring quarter indicated an increase in the use of reflective thinking and more complex thinking about problem resolution. Five tables are included, and a proposal for implementing critical incident reflection as a means of professional development is included in the appendix. (22 references) (LMI)

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CRITICAL REFLECTIVE THINKING AS A MEANS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Paula Myrick Short

James S. Rinehart

Auburn University

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Running Head: Reflective Practice

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Abstract

The preparation of school principals who will provide leadership in restructured schools requires programmatic approaches that will foster and develop critical analysis and reflection upon human action, school practices, and educational goals. These strategies should develop the capacity of school principals to be reflective, to make sense of unclear and unique situations/problems, and to understand the complexities of schooling. Preparation programs must discover ways to develop principals' thinking and decision making in building expertise.

The objectives of this paper are to present a model for fostering the reflective thinking skills of students in educational administration preparation programs, to discuss the rationale for the model based on cognitive psychology, to describe how the reflection model fits within a programmatic framework of a doctoral program of educational administration, and to present some initial findings about the impact of the model on the students. This model has been used for three years with three cohorts of doctoral students at a major university.

CRITICAL REFLECTIVE THINKING AS A MEANS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The emphasis on restructuring schools focuses on empowerment, the redesign of roles and responsibilities of school participants including the principal, and rethinking how to best meet the instructional needs of students through the core technology of teaching (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Cuban, 1990; Murphy & Evertson, 1990). School restructuring appears to be evolutionary and involves issues of trust, communication, risk taking, structures for participant involvement, training, and critical incidents (Short, Greer, & Michael, 1991). Principals in restructured schools assume facilitative roles in this complex process (Short et al., 1991).

Therefore preparation of school principals who will provide leadership in restructured schools requires programmatic approaches that will foster and develop critical analysis and reflection upon human action, school practices, and educational goals. These strategies should develop the capacity of school principals to be reflective, to make sense of unclear and unique situations/problems, and to understand the complexities of schooling. Facilitating the processes that develop administrative expertise (thinking, decision making, and problem solving) becomes a significant role for preparation programs.

The objectives of this paper are to present a model for fostering the reflective thinking skills of students in educational administration preparation programs, to discuss the rationale for the model based on cognitive psychology, to describe how the reflection model fits within a programmatic framework of a doctoral program of educational administration, and to present some initial findings about the impact of the model on the students. The model has been used for three years with three cohorts of doctoral students at a major university.

Conceptual Framework

Support for the use of reflection comes from the research on expert versus novice problem solving in the area of cognitive psychology (Chi, Feltovich, & Glaser, 1981; Lesgold, 1984; Frederiksen, 1984; Rabinowitz, Mitchell, & Glaser, 1986) as well as the work of Schon (1987). Schon (1987) suggests that unique

problems require unique answers in which the practitioner must go beyond the rules and technical knowledge and devise new methods of reasoning, constructing and testing new categories of understanding, strategies of action, and ways of framing problems.

Broudy (1981) indicated that the highest order of learning involves the development of stencils (schemata) which practitioners use to frame experience. When developed, these stencils can be utilized by practitioners to form new stencils as additional experiences or knowledge are encountered. Many schemata are developed as a result of the mix between and among tradition, past actions, culture, and beliefs.

Expert-Novice Problem Solving

Research on problem solving from cognitive psychology suggests that there is no such thing as expertise without a knowledge base that is extensive and accessible (Chi, Feltovich, & Glaser, 1981; Rabinowitz & Chi, 1987). In addition, there is evidence that expertise also requires specific and general strategies for the application and monitoring of that content knowledge (Alexander & Judy, 1988; Pressley, 1986). Research in specific domains such as physics and mathematics (Chi et. al, 1981) indicates that experts focus on underlying principles, theories, and concepts of problems faced (Hardiman, Dufresne, & Mestre, 1989). In other words, they begin the problem-solving process by "considering what principle or principles apply most appropriately to the situation, and then decide on a strategy or procedure that will be used to instantiate that principle, or those principles" (Hardiman et al., 1989, p. 627). Berlinger (1986) found that experts have better and faster pattern recognition skills than novices. In addition, experts tended to relate problems to the social contexts within which the problems were found (Berlinger, 1986).

In contrast, novices tend to focus on surface features (Chi et al., 1981; Schoenfeld & Herrmann, 1982; Hardiman et al.,1989) in identifying a problem as similar to others faced in the past. The novice's typical approach to solving a problem is to cue on descriptions of the problem from surface features failing

to focus on the deep structures and underlying principals of the problem in order to categorize problems (Chi et al., 1981).

In studies of novice and expert teachers, Berlinger (1986) found that the mental networks of meaning (schemata) of experts included more categories, greater detail, and greater interconnectedness than the mental networks of novices. Leinhardt & Greeno (1986) suggested that when expert teachers are confronted with a problem, they draw on rich previously learned patterns and information to a much greater extent than do novice teachers. Novices produce fewer interpretations and possible alternatives in problem framing and solution (Leinhardtf & Greeno, 1986).

Reflective Practice

Osterman (1991) has suggested that, based on the work of Argyris and Schon (1974), reflective practice can facilitate organizational change by bringing about changes in the behaviors of individuals in those organizations. This can occur because reflection upon theories-in-use; a person's beliefs, position, culture, action theories; adds to an individual's understanding and knowledge base about how and why one does what one does in action. This can lead to change in behavior because new information "leads to the development of new theories-in-use (Osterman, 1991).

Hart (1990) suggests that action is improved by thought. Further, that reflection "can encompass the integration of knowledge and action through thought" (Hart, 1990, p. 153). Hart (1990) argues that reflection on what one knows prior to and during action not only increases the quality of choices in decision making but expands the administrator's knowledge base affecting future decisions.

Frederiksen (1984) suggests that decision making around ill-structured problems, often the kinds of problems facing administrators, requires a repertoire of information and a flexibility in strategies for accessing and using that knowledge. Experts have developed an expansive, interconnected knowledge base that is structured in such a way that it is "integrated with past organizations of knowledge so that they are retrieved from memory rapidly in

larger units" (Glaser, 1989, p. 272). This representational ability of experts includes fast recognition and perception of underlying principles of a problem (Glaser, 1989). Herein lies the tie between reflection and developing expertise. In his research to uncover how instructional processes can develop expertise, Glaser (1989) has focused on the emphasis on understanding in guiding learning as a means by which new knowledge associations and information nodes are established. In other words, he finds interesting those processes that generate explanation in the course of instruction; "explanation that indicates coherence in a knowledge structure on the basis of which inferences can be made, explanations that supplies forgotten or unlearned causal connections, and explanations that relate information being processed to prior information so that learning occurs (p. 276). In other words, reflection, where knowledge and its use become objects of interrogation and hypothesis testing, can be the mechanism by which knowledge can become increasingly interconnected, integrated with past experiences allowing persons to modify their knowledge and develop schemata that facilitate more advanced thinking (Glaser, 1989, p. 273).

Method

Participants

Graduate students (N=10) in the doctoral program (Ed.D.) at Auburn University participated in the Leadership Seminar that center on developing the reflective practitioner. The purpose of the seminar is to integrate theory and practice as well as provide a vehicle for students to satisfy the alternative residency requirements. Students in this seminar are interested in leadership at either the secondary level (K-12) or higher education level. Positions held by students at the secondary level included assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, media coordinator, Chapter I Director, and assistant vocational director. At the higher education level, students (N=3) held positions such as assistant registrar, coordinator of a nursing program at a regional institution, and graduate assistant.

Procedure

Yearlong Set of Experiences

Students participate in a seminar motif for five consecutive quarters that begin in the summer and conclude in the following summer. The experiences promote professionalism and collegiality and are integrated into subsequent coursework. These experiences focus on developing school leaders who become proactive, reflective change agents. In addition, the experiences also serve to socialize the students into the profession of educational administration that centers on an environment that models empowerment, cooperative problem solving, and shared decision making.

The format is flexible with guest speakers, panel discussions, small group experiences, simulations, case studies, self-assessments and many other formats. As part of the experience, each student develops a school improvement project which is implemented in the school and evaluated at the end of the yearlong set of experiences. Experiences focus on nine objectives including critical reflection; historical, social, psychological, political, and economic perspectives on education; organizational theory; technology; inquiry; management, administration, and policy making; leadership; women in educational administration; and future perspectives in education.

Reflective Model and Journal

Four times during the year, the cohort participate in a critical reflection procedure. The purpose of the procedure is to enhance the students' abilities to use critical reflective thinking in examining their position on an incident or problem, the basis of the position in culture and tradition, and the impact of these on action within the administrative role of the principal. The model for reflection is based on the assumption that any action or experience is the result of the interaction of four sources of influence. Those four sources are ACTION, POSITION, CULTURE, and TRADITION.

The model includes:

-Presenting an incident

-Focusing on a shift in action

-Identifying thoughts and feeling at the shift

-Generating a metaphor for the thought or feeling .

-Identifying leadership perspective in the metaphor

-Comparing, contrasting, and correlating perspectives

-Identifying insights and questions

-Determining implications

The above model is applied four times during the year during the seminar. (See Appendix A for a complete description of the Reflection Model) dT students keep a "Reflective Journal" throughout the yearlong set of experiences. Students enter, on a weekly basis, an incident requiring action in their Reflective Journals. Being in a position of leadership presented each student with real-life situations (critical event) that required decision making. Students were asked to identify a critical event each week and write about the event in their journals. Each journal entry was to follow a format of describing the event, indicating what the student did as leader, reflecting on why they did what they did, and explaining alternative ways to handle similar events.

Periodically, faculty meet individually with each student to discuss entries in the journal and interact, in a reflective mode, on the outcomes. Journals are collected periodically, for faculty review. All journals are turned in at the end of the year.

Journal entries were written for three quarters beginning in the fall quarter of 1990 and ending with the spring quarter, 1991. During the three quarters, students completed an average of nine entries during the fall quarter, an average of six entries during the winter quarter, and an average of nine entries during the spring quarter. These entries were analyzed by two faculty members using a framework (see Table 1) developed to analyze the reflective thinking of student teachers (Sparks-Langer, Simmons, Pasch, Colton, & Starko, 1990)

Framework and Inter-rater Reliability

The framework in Table 1 presents levels of language and thinking in a hierarchical fashion. Illustrations of each level found in the journal entries

are also in Table 1. In level 1 language, no description of the critical event is provided. Level 2 language depicts the event in simple, layperson terms. For example, "The decision was made to utilize the available existing area." A student who is at level 3 labels events with appropriate terms such as: "I decided to put his schedule back on the system and we sent notes to all of his instructors."

At level 4 language, a student explains the event with tradition or personal preference given as the rationale as in: "I determined that tryouts [for cheerleader and majorette] will be held two days after school is out." When a student uses level 5 language, an explanation is given with principle or theory as the rationale. As an example, "I told the man that the series is used for supplemental reading and that I did not feel comfortable rendering a decision without the involvement of a team of individuals representative of the school district." At level 6 language, a student explains an event with principle/theory and consideration of context factors such as: "Based on progressive deterioration of faculty member's health, I have assigned him ... This is a plan which will allow for student progression in the case of illness without overburdening other summer nursing faculty." Finally, with level 7 language, a student explains an event with consideration of ethical, moral, and political issues. As an example of level 7 language, "If this option is chosen, he may view it as a threat, become more stressed, and will probably state that he is doing his job as required. I am unwilling to take this stance at this time. Option two may very well put his position in jeopardy."

Two faculty were responsible for the seminar during the 1990 and 1991 school year and they utilized the framework to code the journal entries. Because the framework is hierarchical, the resulting codes would be considered ordinal level data. Appropriate statistics for inter-rater reliability with ordinal level data would be Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient and coefficient kappa.

The two faculty members coded journal entries from another cohort of students to achieve agreement on their understanding of the framework and to

achieve inter-rater reliability before coding the complete set of journal entries from the 1990-1991 cohort. Prior to coding the 1990-1991 journals, inter-rater reliability of .70 was achieved using Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient on one student's journal from another cohort. This procedure was followed when half of the journals were coded (inter-rater reliability was .85) and following completion of the coding (inter-rater reliability was .95) using different student journals.

To account for chance agreement, Cohen (1960) developed the kappa coefficient to measure a proportion of agreement corrected for chance. Inter-rater reliability, measured by the kappa coefficient, is assessed on nominal level data. Mezzich, Kraemer, Worthington, and Coffman (1981) extended the kappa coefficient for use with ordinal level data, multiple observations, and multiple observers. This method is appropriate for small sample sizes and statistical significance of the kappa coefficient can be assessed (Mezzich, et al., 1981). This extension of the kappa coefficient was appropriate for assessing inter-rater reliability for this study.

Inter-rater reliability and its statistical significance were assessed for the 1990-91 journals using the extension of the kappa coefficient. Overall inter-rater reliability was .74 and was significant ($t=21.76$, $p<.001$).

Analysis

Journals were analyzed for incident themes, and evidence of developing expertise (superficial descriptions of incidents versus underlying principles). To seek evidence of developing expertise, journal entries were coded using the Administrator's Reflective Thinking Framework (see Table 1). Each journal entry for each quarter was also reviewed for a theme and these themes were categorized into general associations. This analysis presented insight into the complexity of issues that students wrote about.

Finally, the medians in Table 2 were ranked according to Friedman (Table 3) and were submitted to Page's L statistic (Hollander & Wolfe, 1973). Page's L statistic is appropriate when there is a natural ordering such as the journals being written in consecutive quarters. The null hypothesis for this statistic

is that the treatment effects for each quarter are equal, while the alternative hypothesis for this statistic is that the treatment effects increase sequentially (fall ≤ winter ≤ spring).

Results

After both faculty members had coded the journal entries for each student, medians were calculated by averaging (medians) all codes from both faculty members for each student (see Table 2). Examination of the medians in Table 2 indicates that 4 students increased their level of language from fall quarter to spring quarter by 1 level, 3 students increased their level of language by 2 levels, and 3 students maintained the same level during the 3 quarter period. When the medians were ranked and submitted to Page's L statistic, statistical significance (see Table 3) was obtained ($L=129.5$, $p=.05$). This significance indicated that the students made use of higher levels of language in the spring than in the fall or winter quarter. Because Page's L statistic was significant, Friedman rank sums were submitted to a multiple comparison statistic that compared all treatments (see Table 4). The follow-up multiple comparison procedure indicated that students described their events with higher level language in the spring quarter than in the fall quarter. However, the level of winter quarter journal writing was not statistically significant from fall quarter or spring quarter. Thus, it would appear winter quarter was a transition period for higher levels of language used in journal writing.

Students who did change their level of language were in various positions. For example, one student was a full-time graduate student and another student was a central office administrator. Still another student was a principal, however, his level of language was 5 throughout the year.

When the general associations were examined in Table 5, there appeared to be a pattern of moving from events, in the fall, that were everyday concerns to events, in the spring, that were complex and not easily resolved. In particular, student 1 moved from events concerning student behavior which were readily solved through rules and policy to events that were complex. The language used to describe these events moved from problem framing and resolution based on

tradition or personal preference (level 4) to problem framing and resolution based on the underlying principles or theory related to the issue including contextual factors (level 6). Student 10, a nurses program coordinator, moved from typical types of faculty concerns (level 4) to an ethical consideration (level 7).

Interviews with the student cohorts in the seminar indicate that those students who already hold principalships are less eager to engage in keeping a reflective journal. However, most students from the three cohorts report experiencing a distinct change in the way that they frame problems/issues. Many indicate they have an increased sense of multiple perspectives in framing issues as well as alternative courses of action. For most of the students, examination of sources of action is a new experience. Most have never questioned why they took a particular course of action. Most have never trained themselves to look for alternative frames for problems/incidents.

Discussion

Findings in this study have implications for the preparation of school and college leaders. Various reports on the preparation of school leaders have promoted the use of journal writing (Hart, 1990; Whitaker, McGrevin, & Granier, 1991). However, research on journal format, the reflection process, and the influence of reflection on the decision making skills of students has been lacking. Also lacking are empirical investigations relating reflection to developing expertise of educational administration students.

In this study, a specific model of reflective thinking was proposed that is the basis for journal entries. Part of the process forces students to analyze what they did based on four frames: culture, action, position, and tradition. Students reflect on a critical event by writing about the event, the action they took, why they took that action, and identifying alternative ways to react to the event. Journal entries completed using this model were analyzed in two ways.

Results of the statistical analysis indicated that a higher level of language was used by students in the spring quarter indicating that students were reflecting on underlying principles or theories as they wrote about their events.

The medians (Table 2) for fall, winter, and spring quarters indicate that a change in level of language occurred for 7 students. Students had moved away from the focus on surface features of problems as is characteristic of novices. By spring, these students were developing characteristics of experts relative to their identification of the underlying deep structures of the issues and problems they addressed in their journal entries (Hardiman, et al., 1989; Chi, et al., 1981). In addition, some students were able to relate the event to social contexts (see Table 2) within which the event occurred (Berlinger, 1986).

The journal entries were also analyzed by identifying themes for the events (see Table 5) and grouping them into general associations. Examination of these associations indicated that students tended to progress from consideration of everyday events in the fall to consideration of complex events in the spring. This supports Glaser's (1989) contention that interrogation and hypothesis testing of knowledge and its use (the reflection process described in this study) may facilitate more advanced thinking.

Though this investigation is exploratory in nature, it does indicate that a statistically significant change did occur in the complexity of thinking about problems and their resolution in students engaged in a reflection process (large group critical incident process once a quarter and weekly journal entries based on the reflection model). However, additional research should explore the nature of that change and the relationship of reflection to the advancement of expertise. Studies involving students participating in the process compared to students who are not participating in the reflection process would be an important next step.

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Table 1

REFLECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE THINKING

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
1	No descriptive language	No description
2	Simple, layperson description	"The decision was made to utilize the available existing area"
3	Events labeled with appropriate terms	"I decided to put his schedule back on the system and we sent notes to all of his instructors."
4	Explanation with tradition or personal preference given as the rationale.	"I determined that tryouts [for cheerleader and majorette] will be held two days after school is out."
5	Explanation with principle or theory given as the rationale	"I told the man that the series is used for supplemental reading and that I did not feel comfortable rendering a decision without the involvement of a team of individuals representative of the school district."
6	Explanation with principle/ theory and consideration of context factors (student characteristics, personnel management, community factors)	"Based on progressive deterioration of faculty member's health, I have assigned him ... This is a plan which will allow for student progression in the case of illness without overburdening other summer nursing faculty."
7	Explanation with consideration of ethical, moral, political issues	"If this option is chosen, he may view it as a threat, become more stressed, and will probably state that he is doing his job as required. I am unwilling to take this stance at this time. Option two may very well put his position in jeopardy."

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics and Reflective Thinking Scores

Subject	Sex*/ Leader Age	Level**	Reflective Thinking Scores Fall	Winter	Spring
1	M	S	4	4	6
2	M	S	4	4	5
3	M	H	4	4	4
4	M	H	4	4	4
5	F	S	3	4	5
6	F	S	4	4	5
7	M	S	5	5	5
8	M	S	4	5	5
9	M	S	4	4	5
10	F	H	4	5	6

* M=male; F=female
** S=secondary; H=higher education

Table 3
Ranks of the Medians Using Friedman's Rank Sums

	Fall	Winter	Spring
	1.5	1.5	3
	1.5	1.5	3
	2	2	2
	2	2	2
	1	2	3
	1.5	1.5	3
	2	2	2
	1	2.5	2.5
	1.5	1.5	3
	1	2	3
Total of Ranks	15	17.5	26.5

Page's L statistic value was 129.5 and critical value was 128 with p=.05.

Table 4

Table of Rank Sums to Show Multiple Comparison Significance

	15	17.5	26.5
15	----	2.5	11.5*
17.5		----	9.0
26.5			----

*The critical value for the multiple comparison test is 11 and p=.037.

Table 5

SUBJECT	FALL	WINTER	SPRING
1	student behavior	personnel problems	events requiring unique solutions
2	student behavior student recognition	declining enrollment lack of resources	assessing student progress recruiting students
3	release of transcript schedule conflicts	administrative support for technology barriers to do job	printing course schedules personal evaluation
4	schedule conflicts reimbursements	schedule conflicts job expectations	schedule conflicts format for class assignment
5	scheduling equipment choice of technology staff development	staff reassignment staff tardiness	staff changes, staff conflict, staff involvement in planning changes
6	student placement	planning	clinical supervision, helping teachers improve, mistreatment of students
7	personnel events student behavior	improvement in areas of curriculum, space, and faculty needs	improvement of school image, personnel, and curriculum
8	personnel personalities faculty grants,	management of bus safety, installing channel one, A.P. tenure, and book adoption procedure	management theme: proration, student behavior, textbook allocation, and book censorship
9	student behavior	personnel situations with principals	student behavior, teacher interns, teacher conduct, teacher transfer
10	curriculum, clinical supervision, program	instructional, faculty selection	terminally ill faculty member, dealt with conflict of needs of faculty member versus needs of students

APPENDIX A

CRITICAL INCIDENT REFLECTION AS A MEANS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

A proposal for establishing a mentor guided critical incident method of instruction for developing leadership skills in educational administration.

INTRODUCTION

One of the constant difficulties in the preparation of educational administrators is the development of an instructional system that will cause the integration of theory and practice to become a meaningful experience for the student. Current testimony of school administrators reflects that their training programs are far from adequate in preparing them to resolve the problems they face (Pitner, 1982). The profession of schooling, at all levels, suffers from a gridlock of independent, autonomous behavior by the members of the profession. This is true in teaching, research, and administration. The process to be described here is a deliberately designed program of educational experience for breaking the cycle of autonomous behavior.

Much has been written describing the effect of the lack of communal support among classroom teachers (Short, et.al., 1988). As a parallel, the school administrator is described most frequently as being consumed with the need to react to immediate problems of little significance that reflect a total lack of continuity. Such behavior can well support the hypothesis that the administrator, in reality, has little more communal support than the teacher. The only significant difference is that the administrator spends a greater portion of time interacting with adults, which we assume provides an environment of greater psychological rewards than being restricted to interaction with children. That may not be a well founded assumption. This program is designed to prepare administrators to function at a significantly higher professional level as leaders within the school community in both actions and interactions taking place throughout that community. The model of reflection employed in the process described here can be adapted as a developmental program for any viable and relatively stable community whether it be corporate, educational, or social.1

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

An Introduction to Reflection

Reflection, in its simplest sense, is looking back at some specific experience to see if we can determine what happened, and the attempt to interpret what transpired within the situation as the happening occurred. Reflecting in a disciplined manner involves the following steps.

1. The experience: an action was taken.
2. Identification: an examination of what happened. (Not the

consequence, but what went on in the experience itself. Who did what?).

3. Analysis: think about the meanings of the action, interpret implications of values reflected, knowledge used, experience called upon, etc.

4. Change: what new understandings have emerged, what new knowledge has been gained, and what are the implications for future action?

The model for reflection is based upon the assumption that any action or experience is the result of the interaction of four sources of influence. Those four sources are: ACTION, POSITION, CULTURE, and TRADITION.

ACTION

ACTION is the exploration of the reality of what we do in a specific situation. It is the development of the specifics of what was done in the action, the thoughts that occurred during the action, the feelings encountered during the action, and the perspectives held concerning the action. The focus is upon the analysis of a specific and actual incident of action taken by a member of the seminar group.

POSITION

The primary goal of the seminar program is the development of a consistent and operationally sound professional position. Each individual in a leadership position holds a certain set of opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and convictions which form the basis of behavior in life and as a professional. Few individuals, however, heave explored in depth the sources of these positions which are manifested in day to day leadership behavior. The exploration and understanding of the values held concerning society, politics, economics, and equality, which are all determinants of the position for which an individual will argue, form the basis of position.

Many of us learn our position from family and significant others in our lives, and standard academic preparation programs have little if any effect in overcoming these more immediate and significant sources of social influence. This results in there being a significant difference in the academic or theoretical statements of professional position and the position reflected in practice, or the position actually argued and defended by an individual. The seminar process being proposed here provides a means for selecting and applying a consistent set of ideas, attitudes, theories, and practices drawn from culture and professional preparation in developing the sources to be valued as the basis of leadership behavior.

CULTURE

Whoever an individual is, is largely a result of the culture

from which that individual comes. Culture includes the symbols, mores, assumptions, values, sciences, artifacts, and philosophies of human groupings. The group size may range from small, a primary family unit, to an entire nation. An individuals notions of "common sense", economics, politics, systems of education, law, and social and professional practices, are all a part of the source of culture.

Culture also includes the formal disciplines of knowledge in academic areas such as literature, philosophy, psychology, music, and science. The various departments of schooling at any level are examples of how the knowledge of the culture is categorized and identifies that knowledge which the culture holds to be important. To become a functional leader within the culture, the individual must be literate in the knowledge base that supports that culture. The seminar sessions will focus upon means of identifying and strengthening areas of individual weakness in that knowledge base.

TRADITION

Tradition is the collection of the corporate memory and scholarship of those who are members of the community concerned with the profession of schooling. As such it contains the ambiguities and contradictions found in the practice of the profession and the accepted sources of knowledge related to the profession. Tradition has unique qualities across institutions and content areas. Most professionals accept some identifiable source of their own tradition, but few know how to approach tradition with an open mind and a vision for change. The seminar is designed to enhance the ability of a leader to be responsive to and aware of sources of corporate memory that are critical influences on individual behavior, and increase the individual ability to resolve the contradictions that exist in the tradition of leadership behavior.

Exploration of the tradition will require extensive traditional scholarship in collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing the knowledge base found in the literature related to the profession. The seminar process will identify clearly, and specifically those areas of weakness existing in individual scholarship in the area of professional tradition.

THE PROCESS

The seminar process consists of 10 specific steps that move from the reporting of a specific incident, through the development of a metaphor defining the incident, to the development of implications for future growth or action.

1. PRESENTING AN INCIDENT

A. An individual member of the seminar group (max. size = 12) will present a specific incident involving interaction

in a school or school related environment. The individual must be one of the participants in the incident. The incident must be closed with action taken and consequence complete. This is not a group problem solving or therapy experience, but an experience in reflection on action taken. The incident should be one that challenged the feelings, values, and professional knowledge of the participant.

B. The group process will be monitored by a trained mentor. The mentor will determine the appropriateness of the incident. If the incident calls for problem solving related to an ongoing experience, or therapy in developing relationships, it is the mentors responsibility to stop the process at this point and seek a new incident.

C. The seminar group, other than the presenter, will listen with care to the incident. They are not to analyze the incident, but they should note what needs clarification in terms of specifics of events in the incident. Such information as who said what, what was the setting of the incident, what was the sequence of events, is legitimate information for the group to seek from the presenter.

2. FOCUS ON A SHIFT IN ACTION

A. As the incident is being presented, the presenter should attempt to be conscious of when he/she felt shifts in action and attempt to identify that point when the energy level within the incident seemed to be most intense.

B. The group mentor will record those points in the incident that reflected shifts in action. This will be done on newsprint or some other media that can be kept before the group. The recording will be done after the incident has been presented in its entirety. The mentor will help the group agree on the focus of the incident (the most significant shift). The presenter must be in agreement that the group has identified the critical focus from his/her perspective of what was critical.

C. The group identifies the moments they perceived to be critical shifts in action in the incident. The presenter can accept or overrule the groups perception.

3. IDENTIFY THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS AT MOMENT OF FOCUS

A. The presenter attempts to specify and separate the specific thoughts and feelings being experienced at the critical shift in action point of the incident. (These are to recorded in a column headed thoughts, and a column headed feelings). A thought might be "I wanted to leave the situation". A feeling would be "I was angry".

B. The mentor records the thoughts and feelings being

reported and keeps the presenter and the group focused on the critical point in the incident.

C. The group attends to the presenters thoughts and feelings and may ask questions for clarification, or suggest things the presenter may be missing. The presenter, however, decides what is appropriate for the listing.

4. IDENTIFY WITH THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

A. The presenter can relax during this section of the exercise, and listen to the groups response to finding oneself in similar action points in experience.

B. The mentor keeps the group focused upon thoughts and feelings related to the focal point and away from discussing the circumstances surrounding the focal point. This is the beginning of the process of moving from the incident itself to each member of the group forming a personal identification with the thoughts and feelings surrounding the shift in action.

C. The group assesses the recorded thoughts and feelings in terms of individual experiences with those thoughts and feelings in their own professional relationships. Every member of the group is brought into the discussion. At no time will the group be allowed to judge or evaluate the original behavior of the presenter, or will the group be allowed to relate to "This is what I would have done...." kinds of statements.

5. GENERATE A METAPHOR FOR THE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

About metaphors --- the metaphor is used to generalize the experience in order that the group may explore what the focal point makes professional leadership look like. Rational analysis of the fit of the metaphor is not allowed. This should be a free wheeling expression of what that collection of thoughts and feelings seems like at the intuitive level. Analysis can destroy the power of the metaphor as the process progresses. The metaphor leads into a more intuitive awareness of perspectives and guiding beliefs that control actions. The metaphor moves the group into a position where the connections between experience and professional tradition are free of predetermination, lose the sense of artificiality, and become more than superficial reporting of knowledge sources. The metaphor moves into a realm where one cannot predict or control the insights and new leanings that will emerge.

A. At this point of the process, the presenter becomes a member of the group and is no longer identified with the incident or the critical shift. The metaphor brings the incident to the level of universal experience.

B. The mentor attends to those metaphors that seem to emerge naturally as the discussion progresses, and guides the group away from intellectual analysis of the fit of the metaphor. The group is guided toward agreeing upon a metaphor that appears to capture the essence of the focal issue. Keep the metaphor on the focal issue rather than letting it flow to another issue in the original experience. If the group has difficulty with stating metaphors, ask them to think of movie, book, or story scenes, titles, lines, that seem to be apt metaphors for the incident.

C. The group is encouraged to brainstorm in describing sensations felt during discussion of the focal issue and stating those sensations as metaphors. Once the metaphor list is generated, the group then decides upon the one that captures the greatest sense of the problem focus of the incident. All others are discarded. At this point, all recorded information from any previous steps is destroyed. The only statement before the group is the agreed upon metaphor.

6. **IDENTIFY ACTION PERSPECTIVES IN THE METAPHOR**

A. Presenter is group member.

B. The mentor has the responsibility of generating a focal question for exploring the metaphor. Examples might be:

1. What is the nature of the professional community pictured in this metaphor?
2. What kind of leader lives in the world of this metaphor?
3. What type of leadership is displayed in this metaphor?
4. What is the implied professional objective in this metaphor?
5. Who are the partners in the world of this metaphor?

C. The group identifies the perspective of the world of leadership as reflected in the metaphor. Normally this will entail examining the positive and negative aspects of the implications of the metaphor.

7. **IDENTIFY THE TRADITION BEHIND THE METAPHOR**

A. The presenter acts as a member of the group.

B. The mentor helps the group examine the sources of tradition (experience, society, knowledge base, etc.) that reflect the alternatives to responding to the metaphor. The examination of the interacting elements follows the model established in step 6. A list of responses is posted.

C. The group selects a particular element of the

tradition to study in depth following the model of step 6. Preferably there will be an examination of hard evidence that supports this examination of tradition.

8. COMPARE, CONTRAST, AND CORRELATE PERSPECTIVES

A. Presenter acts as group member.

B. The mentor should ask questions that sharpen focus on differences and similarities in perspective from the various areas of the tradition. Do the ACTION perspective and the TRADITION perspective form a match, or are they in conflict? What is the reason for conflict? Do experience, social expectations, and knowledge match or form a basis for conflict? Move each individual in the group to reflect upon his/her personal POSITION and its implications for ACTION.

C. The group examines its own perspective at the individual level.

9. IDENTIFY INSIGHTS AND QUESTIONS

A. As a group member.

B. The mentor asks each member of the group to encapsulate his/her own learning that has resulted from the experience.

C. The group presents any new insights that have been gained concerning leadership behavior and functioning. Focus especially on changes in POSITION that may occur as a result of the seminar.

10. DETERMINE IMPLICATIONS

A. As a group member.

B. Ask questions such as "What will you do if -- ", "When, specifically, are you going to explore new alternatives for action?", "Where can you find the sources of support for change?". Affirm the presenter and the group for their participation.

C. The group is encouraged to begin a log book or journal to keep a record of new POSITIONS and ACTIONS taken as a result of the seminar experience. Implications may emerge later as new experiences with incidents occur. Step 10 may be a long range result, so do not force immediate and superficial responses.

1. The model being presented here borrows extensively from a model developed by the School of Theology, The University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee.

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Drs. Paula M. Short & Jim Rinehart